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PHILLY GETS FASHION'S NIGHT OUT {page 16}

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Wednesday, September 5, 2012

NFL PREVIEW

CUT HIM SOME FLAK

- Can Vick stay healthy for 16 games?
- Answer is key to Eagles winning Super Bowl
- Maker of QB's protective vest guarantees safety
- If not, Foles is ready, willing {pages 20-27}

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In the news

Pa. fracking firm expands

Pennsylvania-based water management company Heckmann Corp. will buy North Dakota-based Power Fuels, which will give the company access to "fracking" markets in the oil-rich Bakken Shale area, extending over Montana, North Dakota and Saskatchewan, Canada. Heckmann provides energy companies with water for fracking, or hydraulic fracturing. REUTERS

Quoted

"I'm not a wuss, so I can tell ya, he looks like an old Chinese man to me."

ED RENDELL, FORMER PENNSYLVANIA GOVERNOR JOKING ABOUT HIS INFANT GRANDSON, BORN NEARLY THREE MONTHS AGO TO RENDELL'S SON AND DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, JESSE AND BEKA RENDELL, ACCORDING TO THE WEBSITE BUZZFEED.COM

Union files against city in firemen deaths

PHILADELPHIA. City firefighters union Local 22 announced yesterday the filing of an unfair labor practice charge with the state Labor Relations Board, alleging the city refuses to turn over audio and written reports pertaining to the deaths of Lt. Robert Neary and firefighter Daniel Sweeney, killed in April while battling a Kensington warehouse fire.

"Clearly, the Nutter administration has something to hide, or they would have turned over the information weeks ago," Local 22 President Bill Gault said in a statement. METRO/AW

RIKARD LARMA/METRO

▶ Gault

'Elevator' shot dead in South Philly gunfire

SOUTH PHILADELPHIA. Police are investigating the shooting of a man in the Hawthorne section of South Philadelphia early yesterday morning.

Robert McKee, 24, was shot once in the head at the 600 block of 12th Street, around the corner from his home at the 1200 block of Bainbridge Street, shortly before 6 a.m. He died on the scene. Investigators said that, though McKee was known to police, a motive has not yet been determined and no arrests have been made.

According to a 2006 article in the South Philly Review, McKee relocated from Glen Mills about eight years ago to escape a troubled adolescence. He moved in with his grandmother and older brother and began playing basketball at South Philadelphia High School, where he was nicknamed "Elevator Man" for his dunking ability.

"He has so much heart, which is something the team has been a little weak in," coach George Anderson told the paper at the time. "This kid refuses to give up and refuses to let any of the other guys give up." METRO/AW

As first day of class nears, district has good, bad news

City schools welcome new leader, but still dealing with big deficit ◆ Superintendent Hite will work part-time until October, leaving some questions for down the road ◆ Many look for fresh start to new year

PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY, MD. SCHOOL DISTRICT

▶ Hite won't begin his full-time duties in Philadelphia until October.

With two days until thousands of students return to classrooms in the Philadelphia School District, there's good news and bad news.

The bad news is that all eyes will be on the district after another year of budget deficits and painful cuts, and particularly, new superintendent William Hite, who was hired at $300,000 a year to bring stability to the system.

The good news is that things can't get much worse.

District officials are expressing a positive outlook for this year. They said the majority of teachers are in place, students should have adequate textbooks and buildings are ready.

"We're extremely excited about this year," said Assistant Superintendent Lissa Johnson. "It's a new year for us, we have a new superintendent."

Hite, who is working part-time until October as he transitions from the top post at Prince Georges County Public Schools in Maryland, is expected to be in Philadelphia for school openings.

The question is how long it will take him to get up to speed on the district's ailing finances and plans to close more schools and contract with third-party managers called achievement networks.

While Jerry Jordan, president of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, said he is optimistic about a fresh start, he is also concerned about how some previous cuts will impact teachers.

"The voice from parents and teachers have been missing in a lot of what the district has been doing," Jordan said.

"I'm hoping that they will begin listening to parents and teachers … and hoping this year they will stop the defunding of public education."

"The voice from parents and teachers have been missing in a lot of what the district has been doing."
JORDAN

SOLOMON D. LEACH
sleach@metro.us

City cabbies protest cost of medallions

RIKARD LARMA/METRO

▶ Driver Mohammed Chodhury bluntly stated how he felt.

Dozens of cab drivers gathered in Frankford yesterday to protest what they called rising fees and unfair regulations against drivers.

The drivers rallied on Church Street outside the office of a medallion owner who leases medallions to a few hundred drivers, according to Ron Blount, head of the Taxi Workers Alliance. Blount claimed lease fees have gone up to $450 per week, despite a $420 max set by the Philadelphia Parking Authority, which regulates cabs in the city.

"Normally when a medallion owner gets away with something, other owners wait to see what happens," Blount said. "If nothing happens, they're going to do the same thing."

One of the accused medallion owners, Alex Freidman, denied that he has violated any PPA regulation.

"It's a total lie, blown out of proportion," said Freidman, insisting that there is no maximum lease fee.

PPA director of Taxi Cab and Limousine Division] Jim Ney, however, said the latest regulations approved by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission do include a maximum fee.

"We've had these allegations before and it's something that … we then request the driver to provide us with evidence and that's what we're doing in this particular case," he said. METRO/SDL

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Long delay in another priest abuse trial

The sexual assault trial of a former Catholic priest and parochial school teacher has been postponed indefinitely due to a death in the family of one of the defense attorneys.

Former priest Charles Engelhardt and Bernard Shero are charged with sexually assaulting a young boy at St. Jerome's Parish in the Northeast at separate times between 1998 and 2000.

Jury selection was scheduled to begin today, but the case was delayed following news of a death in attorney Michael McGovern's family.

Rescheduling could delay the case for weeks or even months. Engelhardt and Shero have both pleaded not guilty.

Engelhardt and Shero were charged as a result of a 2011 grand jury which investigated priest sex abuse in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Also charged with sexual assault were Rev. Edward Avery and Rev. James Brennan, along with Monsignor William Lynn who was accused of conspiracy and endangering the welfare of a child. METRO/SDL

Comcast voted top job spot for Latinas

Latina Style Magazine yesterday crowned Philadelphia-based Comcast as "Company of the Year" in its 15th annual list of the top 50 companies for female Hispanic employees.

Comcast scored high marks for its increase in Latina employees — its overall percentage of Hispanic employees jumped nearly 2 percent between 2010 and 2011 — recruitment policies targeting Latinas, an employee resource group educating Hispanics about advancement opportunities and last year's acquirement of Spanish-language broadcasting network Telemundo.

At the same time, according to the magazine, less than 5 percent of Comcast employees are Latina, and their board of directors — which consists of 10 men and one woman — has no Latinas at all.

The honor also comes at a time when Comcast is embroiled in a civil rights lawsuit filed last year by employees at its South Side Chicago location. They allege the company engaged in systematic practices discriminating against minority employees and customers, including circulating a work order reading, "send White Tech only," according to the complaint. Latina Style Magazine President and CEO Robert Bard did not return calls for comment. A representative from Comcast said it's their policy not to comment on ongoing litigation. More than 800 Fortune 1000 companies are evaluated through a survey sent out by the magazine.

Quoted

"It is the most intensive effort that our company undertakes in ensuring that Latinas and the companies that they work for receive the recognition they deserve."
BARD

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Eagles. Pep rally

▶ Fans tossed around the pigskin at Love Park during a meet and greet with some Eagles players.

RIKARD LARMA/METRO

Rain can't down Eagles fans

Torrential downpour yesterday morning didn't drown out a pep rally for the Eagles. Their 2012 season kicks off 1 p.m. Sunday against the Browns in Cleveland. A large crowd braved what became a steady rain at the Center City park.

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Pa. still leaning left in crucial Nov. race

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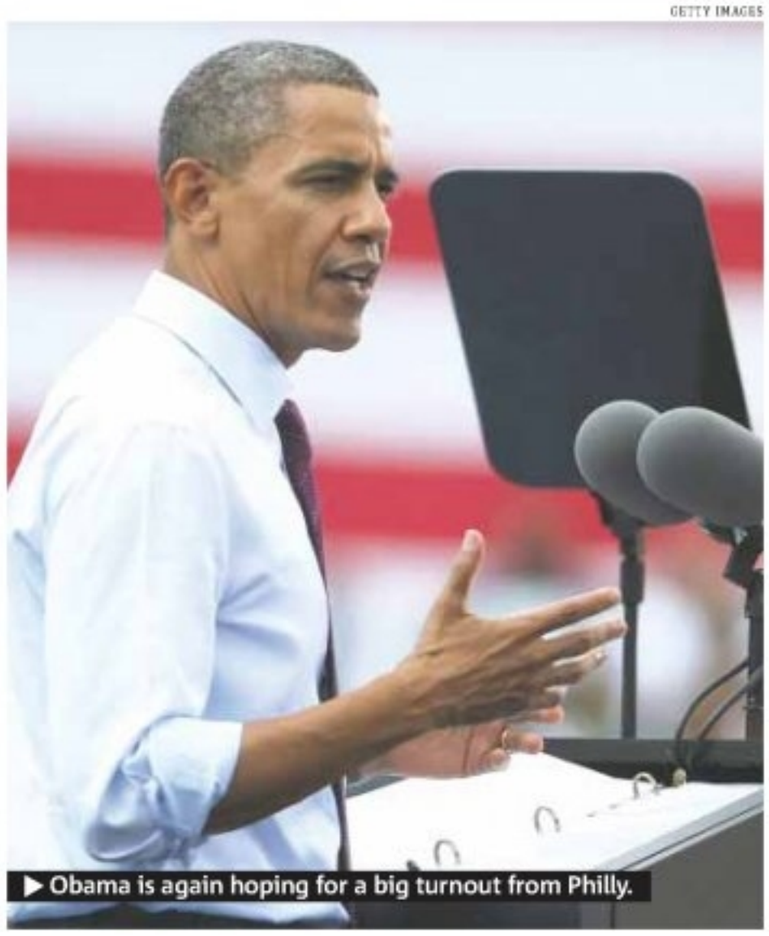

▶ Obama is again hoping for a big turnout from Philly.

◗ Most observers believe GOP has uphill battle to win state's 20 electoral votes ◗ But laissez-faire voting in urban counties could doom President

Pennsylvania, the Democratic political consultant James Carville once famously observed, is "Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, with Alabama in between."

Although the Democrats carried the Keystone State in the past five presidential contests, it is competitive this time. In 2010, the Republicans captured the governorship and a U.S. Senate seat.

"This will be the closest election we've seen in decades," former Republican Gov. Tom Ridge said. He sees the state as "slightly light blue," or just tilting Democratic.

"Democrats can't be complacent," added former Democratic Gov. Ed Rendell, who nonetheless gives President Barack Obama an edge.

Both parties are putting a priority on winning Pennsylvania's 20 electoral votes, with frequent visits by the candidates.

Diminished enthusiasm

Voter responses to Obama himself may help decide the state, in addition to the economic stagnation that is a central issue nationally.

Diminished enthusiasm may shrink the president's margins in the cities and suburbs while widening Romney's advantage in most other places, according to Terry Madonna, director of Franklin & Marshall College's Pennsylvania poll.

In 2008, Obama beat the Republican John McCain by 759,319 votes in the six urban and suburban counties, which overwhelmed McCain's advantage of almost 150,000 votes across the rest of the state.

It is especially critical for Obama. He is working to repeat his huge margins in the two major cities and four voter-rich suburban Philadelphia counties.

His Republican challenger, Mitt Romney, will try to limit the Democrats' urban advantage, poll evenly in the suburbs and win big in "Alabama," or the rest of the state.

Recent polls consistently show Obama with an advantage, with as much as a double-digit lead.

At 7.5 percent, the jobless rate in Pennsylvania is almost a percentage point below the national average and down from a peak of 8.7 percent in March 2010. Manufacturing accounts for 13 percent of the state's jobs, compared with 25 percent three decades ago as the coal and steel industries have declined.

A new and potentially transformative economic element is booming natural gas production from shale using hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, in western Pennsylvania and bordering eastern Ohio. The industry is adding jobs in both states.

Politically, that may cut both ways, benefiting Romney as an advocate of increased output, and lifting Obama because of employment gains.

At the same time, environmental concerns related to fracking, including the potential of water pollution, complicate the issue, according to the former governors Ridge and Rendell. **BLOOMBERG**

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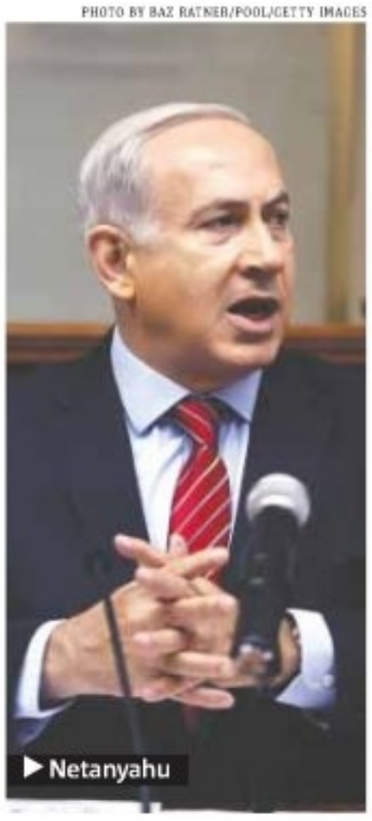
Stunned by US rebuke, Israel prepares Iran climbdown

PHOTO BY BAZ RATNER/POOL/GETTY IMAGES



Stunned by a rebuke from the United States' top general, Israel is preparing a climbdown strategy in its war of words over Iran's nuclear program.

A burst of bellicose rhetoric last month led Western allies to fear that Israel was poised to launch a unilateral strike against Iran in an effort to hobble the Islamic Republic's contested nuclear facilities.

Convinced Iran is seeking the atomic bomb, Israeli leaders have warned of a possible Holocaust if Tehran is not stopped; but the saber-rattling clearly riled Washington.

In a move that dismayed Israeli ministers, U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey told reporters in Britain last week that the United States did not want to be "complicit" in an Israeli attack on Iran.

He also warned that go-it-alone military action risked unraveling an international coalition that applied progressively stiff sanctions on Iran.

Dempsey's comments made clear that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was isolated and that if he went ahead with an attack, could jeopardize all-important ties with the Jewish state's closest ally.

"Israeli leaders cannot do anything in the face of a very explicit 'no' from the U.S. president. So they are exploring what space they have left to operate," said Giora Eiland, who served as national security adviser from 2003 to 2006.

"Dempsey's announcement changed something. Before, Netanyahu said the United States might not like [an attack], but they will accept it the day after. However, such a public, bold statement meant the situation had to be reassessed." **REUTERS**

US manufacturing slows at sharpest rate for three years

Manufacturing in the United States shrank at its sharpest clip in more than three years last month, a survey showed yesterday, the latest sign that the slowing global economy is weighing on an already weak U.S. recovery.

August was the third month in a row of contraction in the factory sector, according to an Institute for Supply Management survey. Firms hired the fewest workers since late 2009, a possible red flag for the August U.S. jobs report due on Friday.

ISM's index of national factory activity fell to 49.6 in August, from 49.8 in July, and shy of the 50.0 median estimate in a Reuters poll of economists. A reading below 50 indicates contraction in the key sector.

"Overall, today's report keeps intact concerns that industrial output growth could slow to a crawl in the remaining months of 2012," said JP Morgan economist Michael Feroli. **REUTERS**

49.6

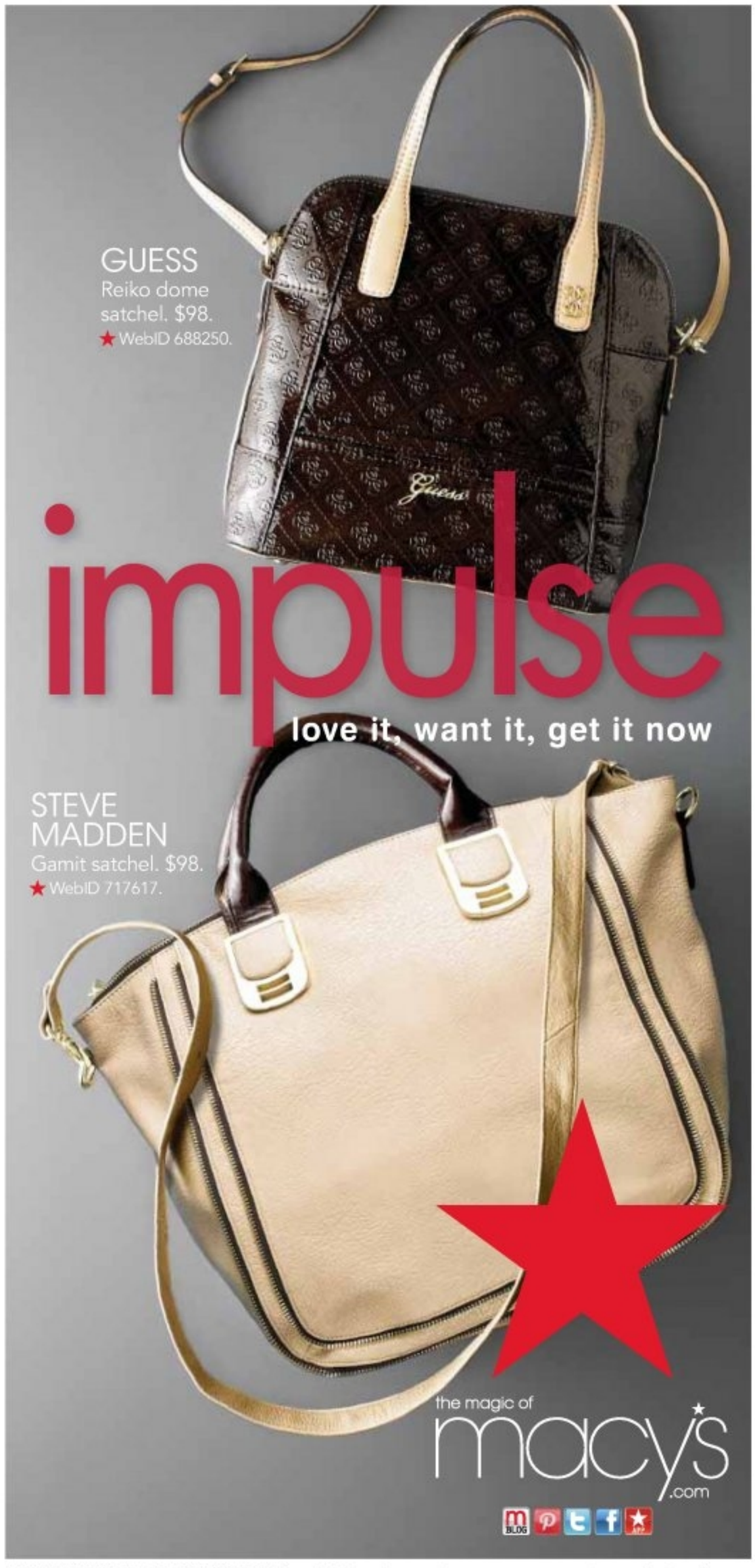
ISM's index of national factory activity fell to 49.6 in August from 49.8 in July.

Auto sales on track to beat estimates

Auto sales continued to show a slow recovery in August as all three Detroit automakers and Toyota Motor Corp. reported gains that outstripped analyst expectations.

General Motors Co. posted a 10 percent jump, as higher gasoline prices spurred sales of compact cars including GM's Cruze.

"Higher gas prices in August will lead to unseasonably strong small car performance across the industry," said Edmunds.com analyst Jessica Caldwell. **REUTERS**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GOP unveils new attacks

Republicans prepared a counterpunch to the Democratic National Convention this week by introducing their new line of attack with a not-so-new question: "Are you better off than you were four years ago?"

Congressman Paul Ryan and other Republican officials converged on Charlotte, N.C., where President Barack Obama will accept his party's nomination and enter the home stretch of the 2012 race for the White House.

The Romney campaign kicked off its effort to "bracket" the convention with a new emphasis on what it called Obama's failed presidency, a theme Romney himself punctuated in his speech a week earlier to the Republican National Convention.

REUTERS

Obama's storm visit aims to draw parallel on disaster response

President Barack Obama toured hurricane-stricken Louisiana yesterday and promised federal recovery help as he sought to show his administration was on top of the disaster response on the eve of his Democrats' national convention.

Obama was preceded by his Republican challenger, Mitt Romney, who diverted from the campaign trail to Louisiana to inspect the fallout from Hurricane Isaac a day after accepting his party's nomination for the Nov. 6 election.

Flying into New Orleans on a hot, sunny day, Obama traveled by motorcade to nearby St. John the Baptist Parish, one of the hardest-hit communities, where he met federal, state and local officials and then surveyed the area.

"The real issue now in the election is: who's got the best plan going forward?"
ELIZABETH WARREN

He saw evidence of the storm's fury — twisted road signs, toppled trees, blown-down fences, debris piled high and pools of water beside the road. Stepping out of his limousine, he paused to comfort a few residents and hear their stories. **REUTERS**

GETTY IMAGES

▶ President Obama chats with residents while touring damage caused by Hurricane Isaac in the Ridgewood neighborhood of LaPlace, in Saint John the Baptist Parish, La.

Top Democrat likens Paul Ryan to Nazi propagandist

A top California Democratic Party official yesterday compared Republican vice presidential nominee Paul Ryan to Nazi Germany's infamous propagandist Joseph Goebbels, drawing rebukes from both parties the day before the Democratic Party's nominating convention formally begins.

In a story reported yesterday by the San Francisco Chronicle, California Democratic Party Chairman John Burton compared distortions Ryan made in campaign speeches to lies used by Goebbels, a fierce anti-Semite and one of Adolf Hitler's closest cohorts.

"They lie and they don't care if people think they lie," Burton reportedly said at a breakfast with Charlotte delegates.

REUTERS

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5:00pm, Grand Court: Shop our exclusive new collections, created by The Philadelphia Fashion Incubator with the designers themselves!

5:00pm, Men's, Main Floor: Get training tips from the pros of Optimal Sport Health Club and grooming secrets form our own men's skincare experts.

5:30pm, Shoes, Grand Court: Join runway coach Glamo as she hosts "Catwalk in Shoes". Then, enjoy a pop-up closet showcasing DIR's Fall line.

5:30pm, Windows: Watch models strut their stuff in Calvin Klein favorites.

Janel Parrish

6:00pm, Men's: While you enjoy samples of blk water, catch up with Chris Manzo and Greg Bennett from *The Real Housewives of New Jersey.*

6:00pm, Impulse on 2: Get ready for your close up with Janel Parrish of ABC Family's hit series, *Pretty Little Liars.*

6:30pm, Men's: Stop by the Smirnoff Lounge for a complimentary beverage* and hang with some of the Philadelphia Cheerleaders!

Karima Renee

6:30pm, Cosmetics, Main Floor: It's a nail party! Get Star PowerRED at our complimentary nail bar, courtesy of Nail Bar at Rittenhouse Square.

6:30pm, Women's on 2: Meet the fabulous fashionable stylist Karima Renee of *Skinny Minority.* Karima will be on hand to help you find the new fall trends that work best for you! Plus, with your $30 Women's clothing purchase, receive a thank you gift†.

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Events subject to change or cancellation. *Must be 21 years or older to consume alcohol; may have to provide proof of age. †While supplies last.

In the news

Warhol 'Marlon' from 'The Wild One' may fetch $20 million

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Warhol

NEW YORK. Andy Warhol's 1966 canvas of leather-clad Marlon Brando on a motorcycle is expected to bring about $20 million at Christie's in New York in November.

Titled "Marlon," the work comes from the collection of Donald L. Bryant, a trustee of the Museum of Modern Art who bought it for $5 million at Christie's in 2003.

The current estimate is "very much in line with where the market has gone for Warhol," said Brett Gorvy, chairman and international head of postwar and contemporary art at Christie's.

BLOOMBERG

Organic food 'adds no vitamins for extra cost'

PHOTO BY ROBERT NICKELSBERG/GETTY IMAGES

▶ The only nutrient that researchers found to be significantly higher in organic compared to non-organic foods was phosphorus, of which very few people have a deficiency.

Consumers shouldn't pay more for organic food because of what it adds to their diets, research suggests. The only gain may come from what it doesn't add.

Organic foods that account for $27 billion in U.S. grocery sales offer no more vitamins and nutrients than conventional products, according to a review of 240 studies done at Stanford University in California.

The research, published in the Annals of Internal Medicine, did find lower levels of pesticides in produce and antibiotic-resistant bacteria in meat.

United States sales of organic food rose sevenfold over a dozen years to $26.7 billion in 2010, according to the Organic Trade Association, based in Brattleboro, Vt. While the reports studied didn't address specific health consequences for illnesses such as heart disease or cancer, they offered little evidence there would be any, the researchers wrote.

"There wasn't any strong evidence to support the idea that organic foods are significantly healthier."

CRYSTAL SMITH-SPANGLER, THE STUDY'S LEAD AUTHOR, IN A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW.

$27B

Organic foods that account for $27 billion in U.S. grocery sales offer no more vitamins and nutrients than conventional products, according to a review of 240 studies done at Stanford University in California.

"There wasn't any strong evidence to support the idea that organic foods are significantly healthier," said Crystal Smith-Spangler, the study's lead author, in a telephone interview.

Organic foods typically are grown without pesticides, synthetic fertilizers or genetically modified organisms; animals aren't given antibiotics. The studies found food produced in that manner to be 30 percent less likely to contain trace levels of pesticides, but they noted that it was uncommon for any food in the U.S. to have unsafe levels.

BLOOMBERG

Exposure

- "This study confirms that choosing organic foods reduces consumers' exposure to pesticide residues, and that the overuse of antibiotics in non-organic production leads to higher level of bacteria resistant to antibiotics in meat," Batcha said in an e-mailed response to questions. "Studies have increasingly shown the importance of minimizing young children's exposure to even low levels of chemical pesticides."
- Of the studies reviewed, 17 compared groups eating organic and non-organic foods and 223 compared the nutrients, bacteria, fungus and pesticides found in the foods.
- The studies looked at a variety of products, including meat, eggs, milk and vegetables.
- There have been no large studies that followed consumers of organic and non-organic foods to assess whether they had better overall health or lower rates of heart disease or cancer.

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GETTY IMAGES

▶ Organic tomatoes

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2

The feed ...

▶ Checking in with some of Hollywood's biggest names to see what they've been up to — in their own words, in 140 characters or fewer.

@SandraBernhard
in lieu of shabbat i'll be listening to bon jovi's living on a prayer.

@SarahKSilverman
Gonna see what comes up when I google "Hitler fan fiction" Stand by

@Joan_Rivers
Pippa Middleton has written a book about party planning. Noticeably absent is the chapter on throwing a wild shindig in Las Vegas.

@JimGaffigan
So suddenly wearing a sombrero while i jog makes me a weirdo?

@azizansari
Starting a book club. We'll only read one book. Total Recall: My Unbelievably True Life Story by Arnold Schwarzenegger. Who's in?

Aziz Ansari

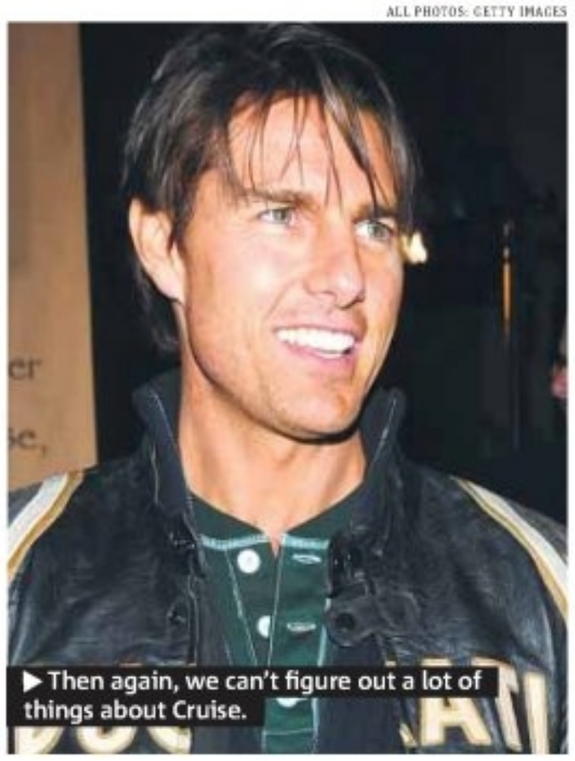
THE WORD

Metro's **Monica Weymouth** shares her take on the world of gossip @monicaatmetro monica.weymouth@metro.us

Tom Cruise is too good for OKCupid

ALL PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

▶ We can't figure out what test Boniadi wouldn't pass.


▶ Then again, we can't figure out a lot of things about Cruise.

Although **Tom Cruise**'s reps have dismissed Vanity Fair's latest cover story as "lies designed to sell magazines," writer and director **Paul Haggis** has come out in support of the article, which alleges that the Church of Scientology acts as Cruise's creepy personal dating service.

In a letter to entertainment website Showbiz 411, Haggis, a former Scientologist, confirms that the church thoroughly vetted Iranian actress **Nazanin Boniadi** in 2005, then ostracized and humiliated her when she wasn't deemed a suitable wife for the actor.

"I was deeply disturbed by how the highest-ranking members of a church could so easily justify using one of their members — how they so callously punished her and then so effectively silenced her when it was done," Haggis writes. "It wasn't just the threats; they actually made her feel ashamed, when all she had been was human and trusting."

We're not sure what's so wrong with trusting, but human? That's definitely a Cruise deal breaker.

Nicki Minaj a Republican?

Nicki Minaj gets political in her new duet with **Lil Wayne**, "Mercy." "I'm a Republican voting for **Mitt Romney**, you lazy b— is f— ing up the economy," she raps on the song, which is part of Wayne's new mixtape, "Dedication 4."

Listen here, people: Whoever tells Mittens that Minaj dressed up like a sexy nun and paraded down the red carpet with a pope impersonator is dead to us. We need to see these two pair up on the campaign trail. We need it.

▶ This is our little secret.

Get well soon, Billie Joe!

Green Day canceled their Sunday night gig in Bologna after singer **Billie Joe Armstrong** was rushed to the hospital. He surfaced in L.A. on Tuesday, where he mouthed to a TMZ reporter that his voice was gone, but reports cite "gastric problems" for the cause of his hospitalization. Our theory: He remembered he agreed to be a mentor on "The Voice" this season. We had a similar reaction when we heard the news.

Talking points

Chris Evans, Minka Kelly are back on

Chris Evans and **Minka Kelly** have reportedly started dating again, rekindling their romance that flickered briefly in 2007, according to Us Weekly. "She did a number on him back then," a source says. "But she reached out to Chris this time." In the meantime, the actress dated New York Yankees star **Derek Jeter** from 2008 to 2011. While the pair have reportedly been hitting the town in Boston and New York in the past month, Evans' friends hope he takes it slow: "He's still a little insecure, so he's being cautious," a pal tells the magazine.

▶ Kelly

Jackson reportedly a 'mess' before death

Michael Jackson was reportedly a mess while preparing for his "This Is It" tour in the weeks leading up to his death, according to 250 pages of e-mails between executives for AEG, the tour's backer, obtained by the L.A. Times. "MJ is locked in his room drunk and despondent," AEG's **Randy Phillips** writes. "I [am] trying to sober him up." Phillips' attempts to get the singer to work didn't seem to go well. He writes: "I screamed at him so loud the walls are shaking. ... He is an emotionally paralyzed mess riddled with self-loathing and doubt now that it is show time."

Justin Bieber adds a little new ink

Justin Bieber's tattoo addiction continues, as the 18-year-old debuted his latest work, a small crown on his chest, in a shirtless photo on Twitter. Bieber's other tattoos include a portrait of Jesus on one leg and a pair of praying hands on the other, the Hebrew word for Jesus on his rib cage and the word "believe" on his forearm. The crown marks Bieber's seventh tattoo.

Prostate Health Assessment Event

The Kimmel Cancer Center at Jefferson and Prostate Health International's Gary Papa Run are offering free prostate screenings as part of a research program. Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among men. Screening is important because prostate cancer shows no symptoms in its earliest stages.

Baseline screening is recommended for all men age 35 years and older.

Free screenings, offering a blood test for prostate specific antigen (PSA), testosterone and cholesterol, and a digital rectal exam will take place at the following two locations:

- Wednesday, **September 19, 2012**, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Kimmel Cancer Center – Bodine Building Jefferson University Hospital, Center City
- Tuesday, **September 25, 2012**, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Radiation Oncology Pavilion at Jefferson's Methodist Hospital

Registration is required. To register for your free screenings, or for more information, call **1-800-JEFF-NOW.**

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Phone sex, the movie

The 1-900 business is alive and well, as is clear in Ari Graynor's latest film, 'For a Good Time, Call ...' Why the actress's channeling of a young Bette Midler may create the perfect opportunity for a 'Beaches' parody

FOCUS FEATURES

▶ Ari Graynor practices her purr in "For a Good Time, Call ...," in theaters now.

In "For a Good Time Call ...," Ari Graynor plays one half of an odd-couple roommate pair (with co-writer Lauren Anne Miller as the more conservative half) who end up best friends and co-owners of a successful phone sex operation. The film gave Graynor plenty of opportunities to show off her comedy chops.

This may sound weird, but this movie really reminded me of "Beaches."

Oh my God, it's so funny. We have a joke that if the movie does well, we want to do a Funny or Die video with Barbara Hershey and Bette Midler called "C–m to the Beaches." I feel like they would do it. I'm starting a Twitter campaign to get Bette to come to our premiere. But yeah, it's basically the same movie, at the end of the day.

It seems in today's Hollywood it's harder to get those kinds of female-fronted comedies made.

There was a dynamic of strength and vulnerability in all those women that I just loved so much — and a freedom in their performances that I just think was so special. Certainly that kind of talent is still around — there just hasn't been the forum to let it loose in the same way. I don't know why that got lost. It's confusing, but it's nice to feel like maybe it's coming back. I feel like there's this really exciting moment right now — specifically with women — of taking charge of their careers, of taking charge of content. There are all these women that are making it happen for themselves. Some people might say it's unrealistic to get ["For a Good Time Call"] made, to get it made in 16 days, to find financing, to get into Sundance, but here we are and it's been such a complete success story. You never know, and you just have to push through.

How important was it for this story to take place in New York?

Well, we shot it in L.A., with one day of shooting in New York. It was so important to the story that it be set in New York. The economical reality of this story of why two people that hate each other would be forced to live together and that sense of real estate only really happens in New York. It's not the same in L.A.

Love lines

It seems surprising that phone sex lines still exist.

Phone sex absolutely still exists. I think the truth is, even with the Internet, there's a different kind of anonymity with phone sex than with Web cams and all that stuff — God knows who can record what on those things. I think more to the point, people like a little intimacy. We're in this culture of porn, but ... I think some people are afraid of it in real life or don't know how to access it in real life.

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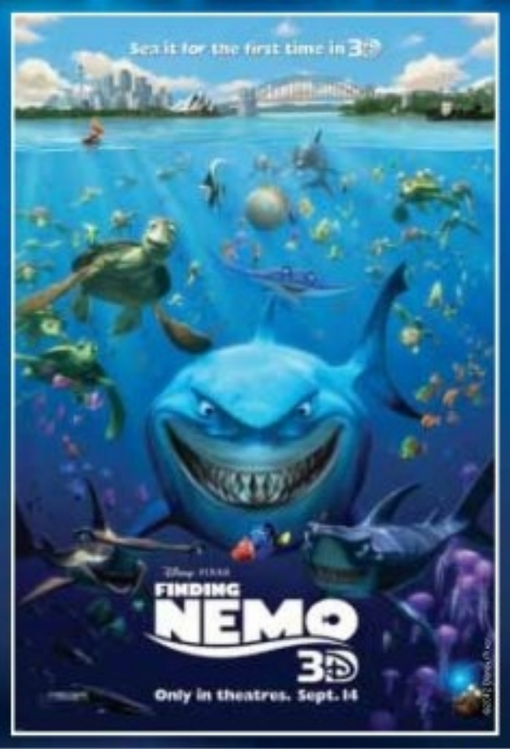

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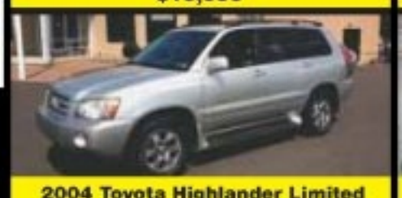
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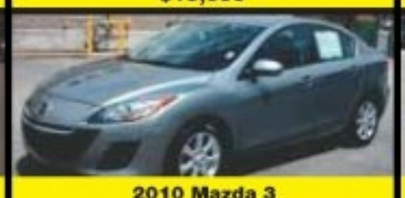
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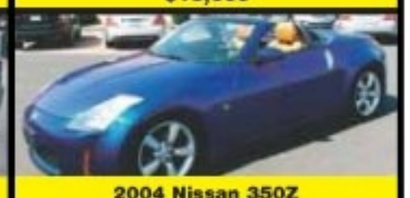
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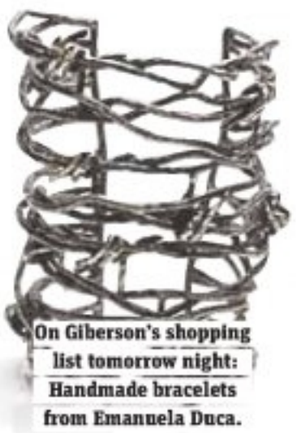
PHILLY'S NIGHT OUT

For the first year, the city is opening its doors to Fashion's Night Out
Where to go tomorrow night, from Center City to Manayunk

It's not really surprising that Fashion's Night Out has finally touched down in Philly. A night of shopping and sales that originated in New York, it's just as much about the free swag as it is about fashion — and Philly loves a freebie, thank you very much. But what is surprising is that the city's first venture into the FNO game attracted the attention of the Accessories Council, a national trade association for the accessories industry. Tomorrow night, they're unveiling their USAMade campaign with a reception at Center City boutique Joan Shepp.

"We admire Joan's store very much, we love the brands that are in her store, and I think there is an opportunity for designers who aren't in Philadelphia already to introduce themselves," says Accessories Council president Karen Giberson.

The cocktail reception will feature jewelry from the new initiative, which encourages designers to manufacture their products in the U.S. "Twenty-five years ago, most fashion jewelry was made in the United States, and it kind of slipped away," says Giberson. "But now, production overseas has gotten more expensive, and at the same time, quality expectations have gotten higher. When it comes to heavy metals and lead in jewelry, it seemed to make sense to start making jewelry in the United States again."



On Giberson's shopping list tomorrow night: Handmade bracelets from Emanuela Duca.

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If you go

Accessories Council cocktail reception
Thursday, 6-11 p.m.
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www.fashionsnightout.com

Shopping list

For a full list of events in Philly tomorrow night, visit www.fashionsnightout.com. For now, we'll get you started.

Nicole Miller
Where: 4249 Main St., Manayunk
What: Free drinks and snacks, DJs; RVSP to ssciolla@mkdandassociates.com to be added to the list.

SA VA
Where: 1700 Sansom St.
What: Get a new look with the help of a professional stylist and peep the new fall/winter collection.

South Moon Under
Where: 1731 Chestnut St.
What: Cupcakes, champagne cocktails, DJs and a chance to win a $100 South Moon Under gift card.

Third Street Habit
Where: 153 N. Third St.
What: Cocktails, free gifts, fall previews and a trunk show from Mother Denim.

Egan Day
Where: 260 S. 16th St.
What: Fall line preview; hand-cut silhouette portraits by artist Zachary Murray.

Kembrel
Where: 1822 Chestnut St.
What: Drinks and fall collections from designers Kendra, ROCK'd by Abbe, Pretty Pretty Rebel and Duke & Winston.

Macy's
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Apple sends out invites for iPhone 5 event

The world anxiously awaits more clues about the unveiling of the latest addition to the Apple product line

Apple yesterday sent members of the press invitations to an event on Sept. 12.

With the prominent number "5" in the invitation's image, the event is undoubtedly when the company will unveil its next iPhone, often referred to as the "iPhone 5" by the media.

San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Apple's traditional choice for big unveilings, will serve as the venue. The event will begin at 10 a.m. Pacific Standard Time (1 p.m. Eastern).

The wait for the iPhone 5 has been a long one. Many had expected Apple to deliver a radical redesign when the company unveiled the iPhone 4S last fall, but all the rumors about larger screens and tapered casings proved false when Apple unveiled a phone that was virtually identical to the last version.

The 4S was technically Apple's fifth iPhone, but observers soon transferred

the "iPhone" label to the next version. Rumors and alleged leaks have continued, and although Apple has confirmed nothing, there is a consensus about some of the features the next iPhone will have.

A larger screen appears almost a certainty — most rumors and supposed component photos point to the iPhone 5 having a 4-inch screen. Apple is apparently going to shrink the dock connector in an effort to keep the product as thin as possible, though that will mean users will need an adapter to connect the phone to older accessories. And a high-speed LTE connection appears a certainty.

One thing guaranteed is that the new iPhone will ship with iOS 6, the new mobile software Apple revealed back in June.

While the new iPhone will be the clear headliner at the event, Apple will probably reveal other products as well, such as a refreshed iPod lineup (before iPhone launches were moved to the fall, the company's September events traditionally focused on the iPod).

The company may also unveil an iPad Mini, a smaller-screen version of its popular iPad tablet, although recent rumors have pegged that release to take place later in the fall.

PETER PACHAL FOR Mashable
The Social Media Guide

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Inside the mind (and body) of a tennis champ

Last year's US Open singles winner, Samantha Stosur, tells us her health regimen Good news: She's a real person who likes to dine out

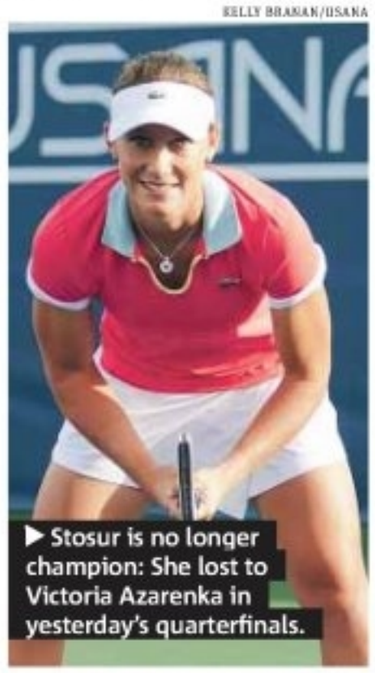
Samantha Stosur has won 23 doubles and three singles championships, including the 2011 U.S. Open. The Australian, a brand ambassador for USANA Health Sciences and an ASICS-sponsored athlete, has traveled the globe playing tennis since she was a teenager. We spoke to her about the diet and fitness routines that lead her to victory.

How many hours a day do you spend training?
It depends on the time of year and what's coming up. Preseason, I do two to three hours' fitness each day, then a tennis session. As you get closer to a tournament, you drop back the fitness and concentrate on being on court, [usually about] three hours each day.

What's in your gym routine?
Weights, squats, lunges, chin-ups and a lot of core stability exercise. I do endurance on a bike. Preseason I'll do boxing sessions and swimming and indoor rock climbing. I try to do stuff that I can't do during tournaments; it makes it a lot more enjoyable to mix it up.

How do you protect your joints?
For any professional athlete, in the long run it isn't that healthy. ... [Instead] of pounding your joints on a treadmill, I use a bike or swimming to avoid extra wear.

KELLY BRAMAN/USANA



▶ Stosur is no longer champion: She lost to Victoria Azarenka in yesterday's quarterfinals.

What's your diet like?

It's not easy when you've got to eat out all the time. Restaurant food tastes fantastic, but I'm sure it's not all that good for you. I try to keep everything in moderation. You learn to find what works for you. I always keep my immune system going with vitamins as a backup. You have to be careful; since having Lyme [disease four years ago], I've become more aware. I listen to my body and what it needs.

LINDA CLARKE
letters@metro.us

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Letters

letters@metro.us

Mileage mandate puts all lives in the (too) fast lane

Will Obama send condolence letters to the families of those killed in the proposed 2025 cars? It is a fact that in a collision, the occupants in a heavier car have a greater chance of survival and avoidance of injury than those in a smaller car. As a pilot and a occasional motorcycle driver, I can justify voluntary risk. Getting a lightweight car to go faster than 50 miles per hour was done years ago with the GEO Metro. But a fleet average 54.5 means that light cars will get lighter and SUVs and vans will get so flimsy that they will fly apart in an accident. Such lightening of vehicles will mean a guaranteed death sentence to anyone tangling with a 18-wheeler. It is not smart to buy a Smart Car unless you can accept a shortened average life span. Has Obama calculated how much our society will be paying in more medical bills? Or is he counting on lowering the average life span to save Social Security and Medicare?

JOSEPH DUPONT, TOWANDA, PA.

Solid, successful marriages are great — even gay ones

RE: "MARRIAGE IS WHAT BRINGS SOCIETY TOGETHER TODAY" (METRO, SEPT. 4) Jason Lee argues that "thousands of years of recorded history have shown that a monogamous, permanent, heterosexual relationship benefits the people involved as well as society — whereas other relationships do not have this same benefit." What goes unrecorded, unfortunately, is the countless gay couples who have stepped in to raise kids and maintain a sense of family where heterosexual relationships have failed. Here's one, Mr. Lee: If gays are not permitted to marry, then maybe heteros shouldn't be permitted to divorce.

LOU ERICSON, VIA E-MAIL

A truly successful, solid, traditional marriage is a beautiful thing. But then, so is a truly successful, solid, nontraditional marriage, like mine. Bob and I have been married (completely committed) for more than 47 years, the second-longest of anyone in our building. Everybody we know, including children, consider us to be a family. Our contributions to society include paying far more than our share of taxes.

DICK ZIEGENFUSS, VIA E-MAIL

GOP's got people feeling lucky again

The RNC convention was a success. I did feel a sense of patriotism and pride in the USA and finally some hope. Yes, there was some rambling and a little weirdness by Hollywood legend Clint Eastwood. However, he made his point. If you don't do your job, then you have to go. President Obama is a nice man and he tried. However, he is in over his head. This happens; now we move forward and elect real leaders and begin with a fresh start. Gov. Romney and Congressman Ryan will lay out their plans for jobs, fiscal responsibility and how to get this economy going at the debates. We will finally have real "hope and change" — and not some punch line.

JOHN MCLAUGHLIN, VIA E-MAIL

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Keep them as brief as possible, preferably under 100 words.
Metro reserves the right to edit all letters.
Please include your name and contact information.

Horoscope

♍ Virgo **Aug. 23-Sept. 22.** Should you find yourself facing a situation similar to one you handled successfully once before, don't try to do anything different. What worked well in the past will work well again.

♎ Libra **Sept. 23-Oct. 23.** Financial trends appear to be exceptionally encouraging for you at this point in time. Now is the day to look for ways to make extra funds and get rid of old debts.

♏ Scorpio **Oct. 24-Nov. 22.** Partnership arrangements tend to have better chances for success at this time than do solo efforts. Should you form an alliance, you will need to play a strong supportive role.

♐ Sagittarius **Nov. 23-Dec. 21.** Strong, beneficial interests will be favoring you at this point in time. Dedicate all your efforts toward generating as much income as you possibly can.

♑ Capricorn **Dec. 22-Jan. 19.** When and where there is a need to assert authority, do so without any hesitation. You'll instinctively know how to do so in ways that won't cause others to take offense.

♒ Aquarius **Jan. 20-Feb. 19.** You'll have a special knack for ably managing matters that have stumped all previous comers. You might have to utilize this gift in two cases.

♓ Pisces **Feb. 20-March 20.** Your judgment is excellent at this juncture, and all involved should benefit. A critical decision is likely to be required that will affect others as well.

♈ Aries **March 21-April 19.** Both buying and selling will be wise things for you to do. This is because you'll be equally as shrewd a purchaser as you are a producer. Do what suits your needs.

♉ Taurus **April 20-May 20.** You'll be equally as adept at figuring out what will sell as you are getting the help you need to produce it. You may find both assets among people you already know.

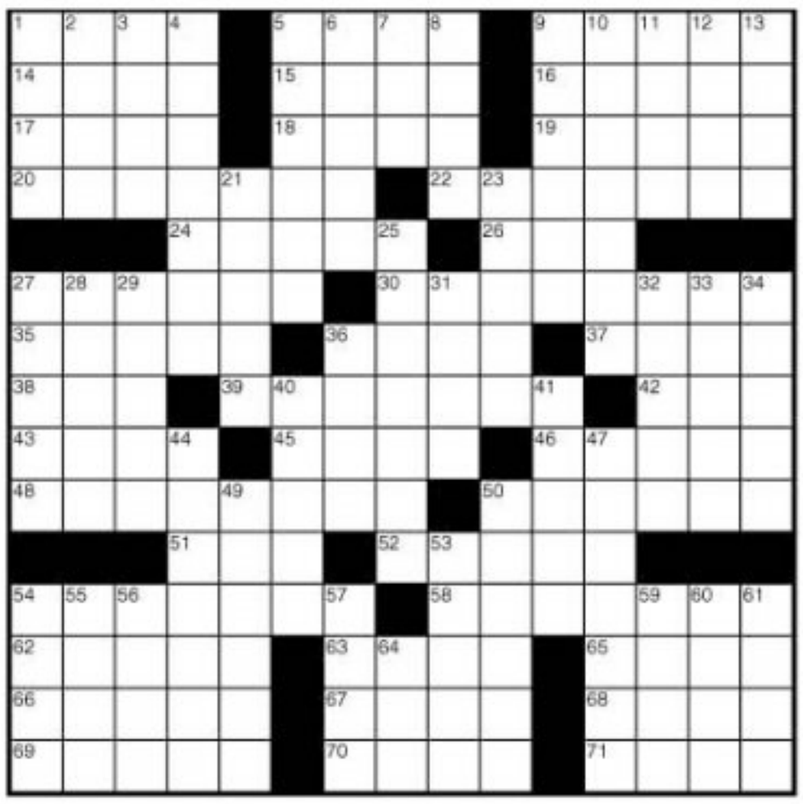
♊ Gemini **May 21-June 20.** Do your best to perform at a top level instead of doing just enough to be acceptable. Accomplishing something significant will be noted and rewarded by the powers that be.

♋ Cancer **June 21-July 22.** Chances are there is plenty of justification for your expectations to be running high at this time. You are now in a cycle where some remarkable things can be accomplished.

♌ Leo **July 23-Aug. 22.** There is a strong possibility that you will be a bit luckier than usual where your career and/or earnings are concerned. Take measures to produce something ambitious and wide-ranging.

BERNICE BEDE OSOL

Across
1 Seductive woman
5 Poker pair
9 Eavesdropped
14 Tony's cousin
15 La femme
16 Brown pigment
17 Graceful seabird
18 Icy burg
19 Kind of toast
20 Slipped by
22 Worst
24 Biscotto flavoring
26 Mo. with no holidays
27 Looked happy
30 Like glass
35 Edgy
36 Queen's quarters
37 Type of wrestler
38 Addams' hairy cousin
39 Library patrons
42 None at all
43 Ibsen heroine
45 Cravats
46 Chocolate tree
48 Favor (2 wds.)
50 Small streams
51 "What — you say? "
52 Nearer the facts
54 Seized the throne
58 Furtiveness
62 Editing mark
63 Chalet feature
65 Gridiron unit
66 Rodeo gear
67 Orange seeds
68 Norwegian port
69 Lower in reputation
70 Attention getter
71 Family mems.



Down
1 Pull the lever
2 Director — Gance
3 Red giant in Cetus
4 Friends-by-mail (2 wds.)
5 Virgil epic
6 Lumps of clay
7 Shade tree
8 Filter in
9 Londoner's wit
10 Surfaces
11 Up to the task
12 Soldiers in gray
13 Mild expletive
21 Nasty laugh
23 Gene Autry film, e.g.
25 Plain as day
27 Itch
28 Ditto (2 wds.)
29 Emcee's remarks
31 "Blue Tail Fly " singer
32 Pound fraction
33 Kayak kin
34 Songs for one voice
36 Narrow margin
40 Liszt opus
41 Fallen-rock debris
44 Talk to a crowd
47 Bubble machine
49 Go softly
50 Most appealing
53 Answers an invite, briefly
54 Bruins of Westwood
55 Import from Sweden
56 Bear, to Brutus
57 Johnny, of movies
59 — majeste
60 Lofty
61 RN employers
64 Three-toed sloths

		2				5	9	
7		5	2		8			3
			5				8	
			9	5			3	
		9	8		1	6		
	1			2	7			
	9				2			
1			3		9	8		5
	2	7				1		

SUDOKU **LEVEL: EASY**

				3		5		
5				7	6			4
3		1			8	9		7
		4		2	3	1		
				9				
		9	8	1		4		
4		3	1			7		6
7			3	8				1
		5		6				

SUDOKU **LEVEL: HARD**

How to play Sudoku: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Solution to yesterday's crossword

J	A	D	E	■	M	A	J	O	R	■	N	O	D	S
E	M	I	R	■	E	L	O	P	E	■	E	V	I	L
T	E	R	R	■	A	A	H	E	D	■	W	I	N	E
S	N	E	A	K	S	I	N	■	E	V	A	D	E	D
■	■	■	N	I	L	■	A	F	A	R	■	■	■	■
W	O	O	D	S	Y	■	■	R	I	N	K	R	A	T
A	M	A	S	S	■	L	A	I	N	■	O	B	I	■
T	A	T	■	P	O	I	S	E	■	M	I	L	■	■
C	H	E	■	R	I	L	E	■	G	R	A	D	E	■
H	A	S	S	L	E	D	■	C	O	I	N	E	D	■
■	■	■	A	T	V	S	■	L	A	C	■	■	■	■
A	L	L	U	D	E	■	T	O	O	L	K	I	T	S
V	E	I	N	■	N	O	R	M	S	■	S	C	O	W
E	T	N	A	■	T	W	I	N	E	■	H	O	R	A
C	O	D	S	■	S	E	M	I	S	■	A	N	O	N

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NFL PREVIEW

WEDNESDAY
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MAX PROTECT

Vick's health Eagles top concern heading into opener ◗ Quarterback fitted for new vest, president guarantees safety ◗ Foles waiting in case of emergency ◗ Time to shake the rust

Some see Mike Vick as a reckless magician. He's too competitive for his own good, which is why the quarterback always leaves games early.

And — with all apologies to backup/rookie sensation Nick Foles — the 2012 Eagles can't afford that if they have any chance of breaking the franchise's 52-year championship drought. Andy Reid knows it. The fans know it. Most importantly, Vick knows it.

So he has enlisted the help of Unequal Technologies, the first company to grant Vick an endorsement deal after his prison sentence. The two have collaborated on a new flak jacket that Unequal guaranteed will keep No. 7 healthy.

"We work directly with the military, so we've learned to be smarter about technology," said Rob Vito, president of Unequal Technologies. "Our vests must stop 44-magnum bullets to within a quarter of an inch. [Vick's vest] isn't bulletproof, but it's the same principle."

Vick has already been injured twice this preseason, once when his throwing hand clipped a teammates' helmet, again when he took a shot to the ribs. He was not wearing this equipment then, nor when he broke three ribs and punctured a lung last winter.

Reid has scoffed at the notion that Vick is injury-prone. After all, football is a very rough sport.

"It's a violent sport where you're going to get injuries," Reid said. "If you're out there worried about that part of it, you're not going to perform to the best of your ability."

Vick could be worried about the mental side, but he shouldn't be worried about the physical part, at least not according to Vito.

"We tell athletes, when you get hurt, don't blame yourself," Vito said. "Blame the equipment."

Vick's new flak jacket is thinner, lighter and more flexible than last year's version. It's made of a new composite, comprised of military-grade, battle-tested Dupont Kevlar. Vick helped design the new vest, which covers his entire sternum. He'll also wear shorts featuring the words, "It's never just a game" and "Prepare for battle."

"That's how Mike Vick plays," Vito said. "Sometimes his zealousness and enthusiasm puts him in harm's way, but that's where we come in."

Unequal, which was founded in 2008, also outfits other NFL stars, like Tony Romo and James Harrison, as well as MLB umpires. When asked again if he guarantees the safety of his product, Vito didn't flinch.

"We build for the military and you have to stop that bullet and shrapnel every time," he said. "There is no other option."

MIKE GREGER
mgreger@metro.us

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Vick hasn't played an entire NFL season since 2006, when he was in Atlanta.

Quoted

"It's going to be custom-fitted and fitted to protect all across my sternum, across my ribs. I think it'll be a better fit."
VICK SAID OF HIS FLAK JACKET

Vick, offense look to shake rust in opener

The Eagles' first-team offense struggled — at least for the few plays Vick was healthy — to get into a rhythm in the preseason.

In that small sample set, Vick went 4-of-7 for 11 yards with no touchdowns or interceptions. The starting quarterback didn't look particularly sharp — his longest completion was a 5-yard check down to DeSean Jackson — before going down for good against New England.

Vick will enter the season with a lot of rust. It might be up to the rest of the offense to help knock the cobwebs off — or maybe his natural instincts will just take over.

"I don't think it'll take long," Vick said of getting his groove back. "One snap, maybe."

"I think he's ready to go," offensive coordinator Marty Mornhinweg said. "I think in that ballgame that he got hurt, I think he would have played in the game if it was a regular season game."

Vick hasn't played a full 16-game schedule since 2006 in Atlanta. Vick became the first quarterback in the modern NFL era to rush for more than 1,000 yards, with 1,039, that season. METRO/MG

62.2
QB rating for Vick in two preseason games. He went 4-of-7 for 11 yards with a 57.1 completion percentage.

▶ Unequal's padded shorts

Break rook in case of emergency

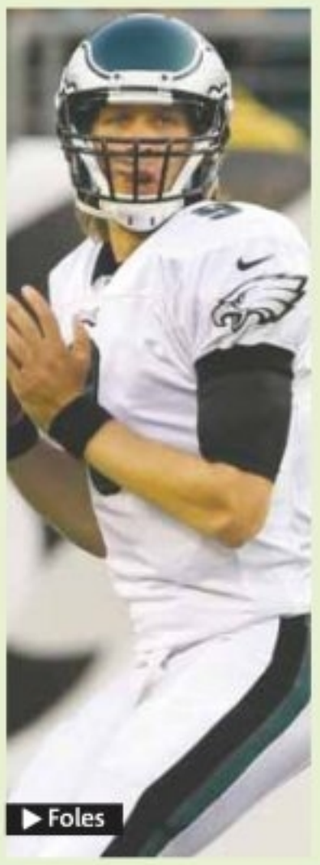
No matter how innovative the technology behind Mike Vick's equipment is, there is no promise that he'll make it through a 16-game schedule.

If he doesn't, the Birds are prepared to lean on a 23-year-old kid with surfer looks and a rocket arm. Nick Foles is the ultimate backup plan.

"I 100-percent support Mike Vick. He's such a talented player and leader of this team," Foles said. "I said it before, but I am going to do everything I can to help this team, whether it's in practice or during a game. I am just going to be ready to play."

And Vick threw the love right back when asked about Foles.

"I feel very confident in Nick's ability to run this offense," he said. "He did a great job in the preseason." MIKE GREGER



▶ Foles

GUYS WHO MUST THRIVE

Eagles need big seasons from some likely (and unlikely) players ◗ Defense got faster, but can it stop the run this year? ◗ Hyped-up rookies need to leave their mark ◗ Nine Birds that we're keeping our eyes on

BRANDON BOYKIN, CB

The versatile rookie is going to be counted on in a variety of ways. The third-rounder was one of the breakout stars in camp, stealing the nickel corner spot from longtime vet Joselio Hanson and showing breakaway speed on kick returns/special teams. With Boykin, the Eagles (already loaded with speed on both sides of the ball) have another star in the making.

PHILLIP HUNT, DE

Hunt has been so impressive that when Jason Babin went down, he stepped right in with the No. 1 defense and only shouted his case louder as the team's new sack master. The former CFL star (16 sacks in 2010) will be an integral part of Jim Washburn's deep, deep pass-rushing rotation. Hunt is extremely explosive off the edge and could be looking at double-digit sack totals this season.

BRYCE BROWN, RB

Dion Lewis might still be listed as the backup to LeSean McCoy, but Brown is the one to keep an eye on this season. He's flashed lightning-quick and sensational cutback ability, making a lot out of seemingly nothing many times this preseason, and he can catch the ball out of the backfield. In a league that loves two-back sets, Andy Reid would be wise to get Brown on the field as much as possible, not just to spell McCoy.

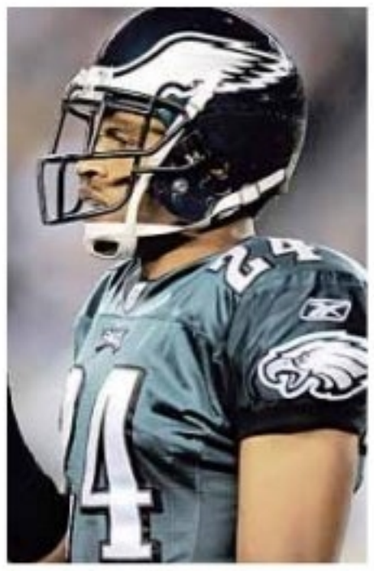
KING DUNLAP, OT

The giant-sized tackle came out of nowhere to steal the starting spot from Demetress Bell in the preseason, and now it's up to him to protect Mike Vick's left side and seal off blocks for running back Shady McCoy. The Eagles have shown a lot of trust in a guy from whom the team seemed to be moving on several times last season. Now, it's up to Dunlap to reward that trust. His role increases significantly if Vick goes down, since Nick Foles is a righty.

DEMECO RYANS, LB

The new middle linebacker is the guy everyone — front office, locker room, coaches — has appointed as the leader of the defense. Ryans struggled at times this preseason (remember the way the Steelers gobbled him up?) but he seemed to improve as he became more familiar with the scheme. If Ryans can be half the player he was in Houston, the Eagles will have their first real stud in the middle since Jeremiah Trotter.

NNAMDI ASOMUGHA, CB



It's kind of odd to fathom putting a guy who signed a $60 million contract in this pool, but he just hasn't lived up to the paycheck in his one-plus year with the Eagles. Asomugha's main highlight (lowlight) was colliding with a teammate and turning Victor Cruz into a superstar. He is supposed to be a lockdown press corner but he seems to struggle with tracking the ball once it's in flight. That can't happen when you make that much bank. He needs to improve.

FLETCHER COX, DT

The Birds moved up three spots in the draft to take the mega-talented Cox. No rookie speed-rusher — especially not one in the Andy Reid era — has generated this much anticipation. Jim Washburn gushes whenever the kid's name comes up. On draft day, he was practically drooling about Cox playing in his famed Wide-9. "When God made him, he made him to be in this system right here," Washburn said. And Wash plans to use him (at both end and tackle) as much as any starter.

RILEY COOPER, WR

Mike Vick has long shown a great chemistry with the third-year wideout, something they developed when they were sharing second-team reps. While Cooper continues to rehab from a broken collarbone, the Eagles may rely on him when he gets back as the big, goal-line target they never had. The fact that they cut rookie Marvin McNutt shows they still trust Cooper.

DAMARIS JOHNSON, WR

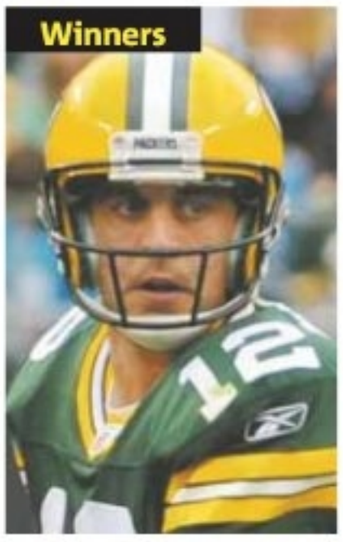
The speedy, undrafted rookie out of Tulsa arguably raised the most eyebrows at Eagles camp. He is deceivingly fast, uses his blockers well and knows how to get good separation. His primary role will be as DeSean Jackson's replacement on punt returns, but don't be surprised to see him in there for a few gadget plays.

MIKE GREGER

NFL season predictions ... sure to go wrong

The grid: We'd bet it with our money ★★★ | We'd bet it with your money ★★ | Fat chance ★ | by Mark Osborne

Winners



Super Bowl picks?
Answer: Packers over Ravens
By: Mark Osborne, Metro New York sports editor
Confidence level: ★★★
Green Bay definitely has something to prove after a choke job in the NFC divisional round last year to the Giants. There's no reason to think they won't be right back in the same position this season ... and finish.

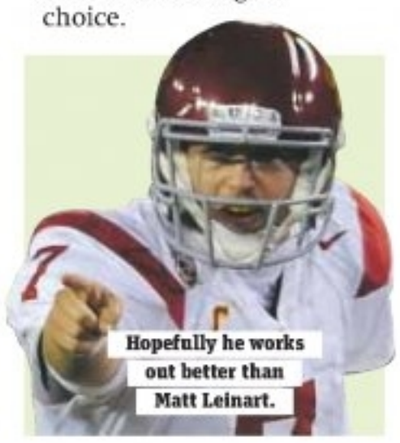
Answer: Patriots over Saints
By: Mike Greger, Metro Philadelphia sports editor
Confidence level: ★★★
Drew Brees is on a mission in the aftermath of Bountygate, but he'll fall one drive short — on his home turf — against Tom Brady and the NFL's most prolific offense. The Pats are too loaded.

Answer: Patriots over Bears
By: Matt Burke, Metro Boston sports editor
Confidence level: ★★★
Homer pick. But have you seen the Pats' schedule? It's the easiest in the NFL. Chicago pops up as an elite NFC team every other year, it seems. Here's saying Brandon Marshall has a huge 2012.

Losers

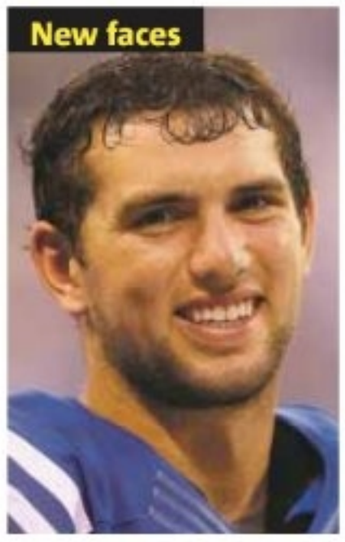
Will the Dolphins finish with the worst record?
Answer: Yes.
Confidence level: ★★
You'd have to be as smart as Ryan Tannehill to pick the Dolphins to have a successful season. They've basically forfeited the year (bye, Vontae Davis) to rebuild for 2013. And they're going to get a nice pick to start off. Better start scouting who else has a hot wife.

Which QB will be Arizona's top pick in '13?
Answer: Matt Barkley
Confidence level: ★★★
Who ya got? Kevin Kolb? John Skelton? A Juggs machine pointed at Larry Fitzgerald each snap? We know they're going to take a QB next year. Why not take USC's **Matt Barkley**? He is the most logical choice.



Hopefully he works out better than Matt Leinart.

New faces

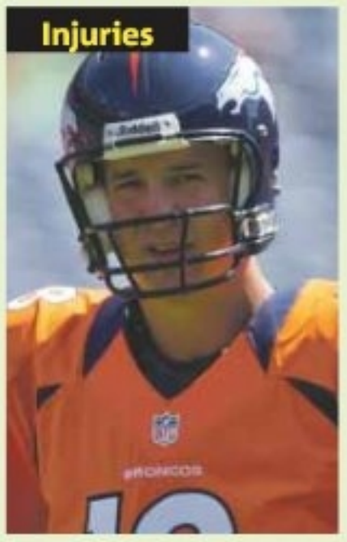


Who will be Offensive Rookie of the Year?
Answer: Andrew Luck (Ind.)
Confidence level: ★★★
It's hard to pick against the current and future savior of Indianapolis on this one. To be fair, he looked *really* good in the preseason. Robert Griffin III is going to struggle big time, by the way. The defensive lines in the NFC East will have him limping off the field.

Who will be Defensive Rookie of the Year?
Answer: Mark Barron (TB)
Confidence level: ★
Granted Nick Saban and Alabama have already replaced him with someone better, but Barron is a great safety. He'll be allowed to freelance in the secondary and will definitely come up with a bunch of picks.

Will the real officials ever come back?
Answer: Yes. Money. Yes.
Confidence level: ★★★
The first few weeks will probably be ugly with scab officials. But don't worry, the real officials will be ready to make different, equally puzzling mistakes once they settle in a few weeks. Give the poor guys a raise, Roger!

Injuries



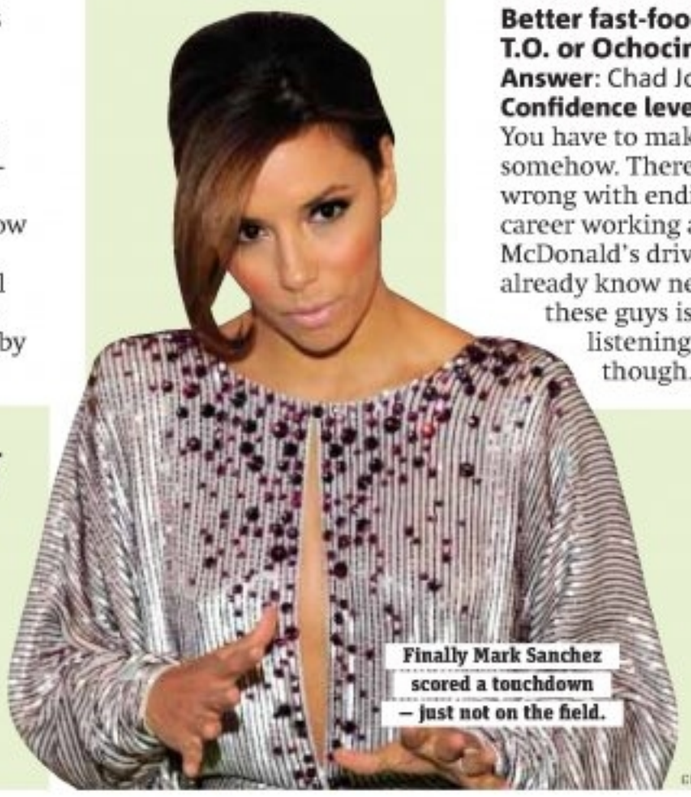
Will Peyton Manning's neck last a season?
Answer: Yes. (Fingers crossed.)
Confidence level: ★★
With everyone caught up in the drama of Peyton Manning's move to Denver and Tim Tebow's subsequent ouster, people seem to be forgetting Manning's surgically fused spinal column. Please don't come unfused. (That's a word, right?)

Will Adrian Peterson's knee be fine?
Answer: Yes.
Confidence level: ★★
Have you seen that dude with his shirt off? It's absurd. I'm surprised his knee ligaments could blow out in the first place. Aren't they made of steel cable? He'll be fine. This message brought to you by my fantasy team.

Will Mike Vick be injured before or after the Eagles' bye week?
Answer: Yes. Just yes.
Confidence level: ★★★
The Eagles could hypothetically be a good team. But if they're going to make the playoffs, they'll probably need Nick Foles to be good.

Relationships

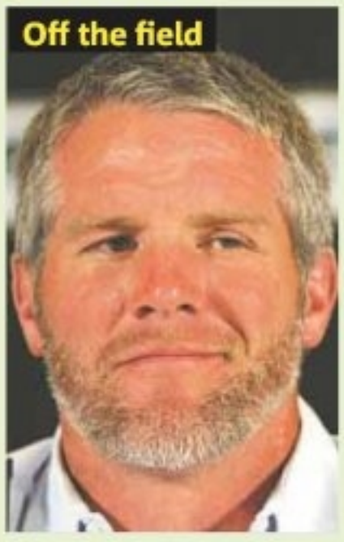
Bigger disaster: Longoria-Sanchez or Tebow-Sanchez?
Answer: Tebow-Sanchez
Confidence level: ★★
This one is very close, mainly because we see both relationships going up in flames within a few months. Now if only we could get Eva Longoria to dump Mark Sanchez *for* Tim Tebow. It's almost too totally awesome to comprehend.



Finally Mark Sanchez scored a touchdown — just not on the field.

GETTY IMAGES

Off the field



After a year off, is Brett Favre really retired?
Answer: Yes! Finally!
Confidence level: ★
Our long national nightmare is over. Hopefully. Unless Brett Favre pulls a Roger Clemens and decides to play for an Arena Football League team "just for fun" and then decides to join the Cardinals. Damn. That's totally going to happen, isn't it?

Better fast-food clerk: T.O. or Ochocinco?
Answer: Chad Johnson
Confidence level: ★★
You have to make money somehow. There's nothing wrong with ending your career working at a McDonald's drive-thru. We already know neither of these guys is good at listening to orders, though.

Eagles 2012 schedule

RICARD LARMA

▶	at Cleveland Browns	Sunday, Sept. 9, 1 p.m. (FOX)
▶	**BALTIMORE RAVENS**	**Sunday, Sept. 16, 1 p.m. (CBS)**
▶	at Arizona Cardinals	Sunday, Sept. 23, 4:05 p.m. (FOX)
▶	**NY GIANTS**	**Sunday, Sept. 30, 8:20 p.m. (NBC)**
▶	at Pittsburgh Steelers	Sunday, Oct. 7, 1 p.m. (FOX)
▶	**DETROIT LIONS**	**Sunday, Oct. 14, 1 p.m. (FOX)**
	BYE	**Sunday, Oct. 21**
▶	**ATLANTA FALCONS**	**Sunday, Oct. 28, 1 p.m. (FOX)**
▶	at New Orleans Saints	Monday, Nov. 5, 8:30 p.m. (ESPN)
▶	**DALLAS COWBOYS**	**Sunday, Nov. 11, 4:25 p.m. (FOX)**
▶	at Washington Redskins	Sunday, Nov. 18, 1 p.m. (FOX)
▶	**CAROLINA PANTHERS**	**Monday, Nov. 26, 8:30 p.m. (ESPN)**
▶	at Dallas Cowboys	Sunday, Dec. 2, 8:20 p.m. (NBC)
▶	**at Tampa Bay Buccaneers**	**Sunday, Dec. 9, 1 p.m. (FOX)**
▶	Cincinnati Bengals	Thursday, Dec. 13, 8:20 p.m. (NFL NETWORK)
▶	**Washington Redskins**	**Sunday, Dec. 23, 1 p.m. (FOX)**
▶	at NY Giants	Sunday, Dec. 30, 1 p.m. (FOX)

It's always Shady in Philadelphia

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▶ McCoy looks to top a record-setting campaign.

There has been much talk of a reduced workload for LeSean McCoy. But, one season after shattering franchise records, there are also a lot of expectations. And not just from fantasy owners — from McCoy himself.

But forget all the hype. McCoy — the third-highest paid back in the NFL after inking a $45-million extension — just wants to win a championship.

"The biggest thing is winning the Super Bowl and bringing that type of atmosphere back to Philadelphia," McCoy said. "As far as personal goals, I'd like to get back to the Pro Bowl."

McCoy will have his work cut out for him without Jason Peters sealing off the left side of the field, a place where he racked up the majority of his league-best 17 rushing scores. The Eagles also chose to keep three backup running backs on the roster (Bryce Brown, Dion Lewis, Chris Polk), which seems to indicate touches will be at a premium.

20 Total touchdowns for McCoy in 2011, which set a franchise record. He had 17 on the ground, three more through the air.

"They will have roles this year," McCoy said. "I remember Andy [Reid] saying at the beginning of the year that he wants to cut some of my reps down because of the number that the backs had behind me last year. I'm sure they will touch the ball."

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Respect the beard: Kelce earning trust

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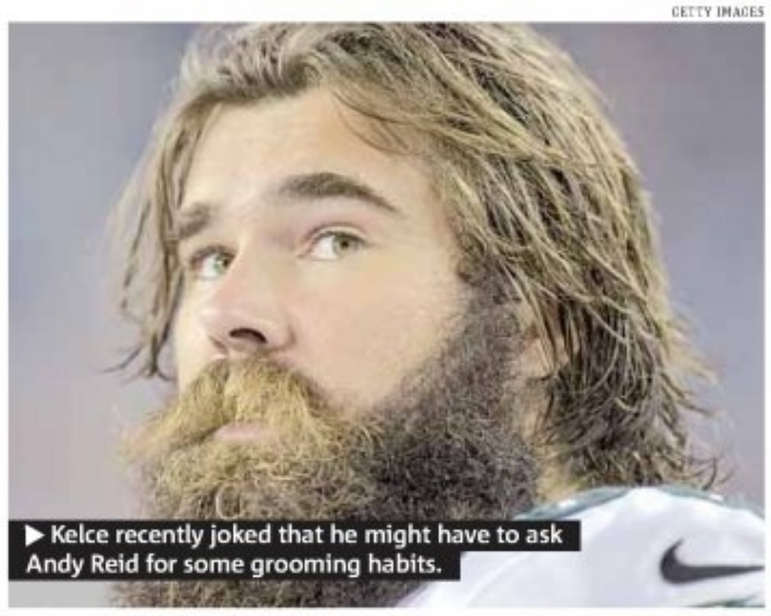

▶ Kelce recently joked that he might have to ask Andy Reid for some grooming habits.

Jason Kelce came out nowhere last season to grab the starting center spot. He was handpicked and groomed by grizzled offensive line coach Howard Mudd, who felt the need to move on from longtime veteran Jamaal Jackson.

One year later, Kelce — and his enormous, woodsman beard — is the face and voice of the offensive line. It's his job to call out the shots at the line, a job he takes almost as serious as his grooming habits, especially his relationship with Mike Vick.

"The trust just keeps getting better and better between me and Mike," Kelce said early this spring. "I feel the guys feel much more comfortable with me being the guy to make the calls."

But Kelce also likes to have fun and is widely regarded as one of the class clowns in the locker room. During the Eagles' Flight Night, he came barreling out of the tunnel in a raccoon-skinned cap. He also painted his famous beard pink during a community service event this offseason.

"We spend enough time being serious," he said. "Every single time we are out on the field, every time we are in meetings, you don't really have time to goof around. When you get those moments where you can kind of cut back and goof off with one another you still like to do that."

Kelce, an unheralded sixth-round pick out of Cincinnati just a year ago, has also become a sort of point person for the media. Whenever you want to gauge the pulse of the team, you swing by his locker.

"Every single person has their role, and my role is to get us started and get us all on the same page," Kelce said. "The center is the vocal guy and he's the one who makes the calls so that's my role in the unit."

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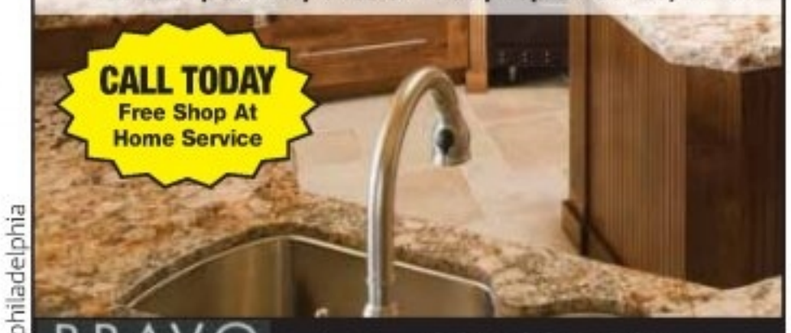

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2012 NFL SEASON: CAN'T-MISS GAMES

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

WEEK 1: STEELERS AT BRONCOS

Peyton is back. The biggest wild card in the NFL is Denver. If Peyton Manning returns to form, the Broncos could be in the thick of the AFC race. Denver's "D" finished 24th in total defense in 2011, but Vonn Miller and Co. have the potential to be a top-10 unit.

WEEK 2: RAVENS AT EAGLES

Look out, Mike! Mike Vick had a pair of scary injury situations in the preseason. Though Baltimore's defense is bordering on ancient, Ray Lewis and Ed Reed should bring the heat at Lincoln Financial Field in Week 2. Philly has cupcakes in Week 1 (Cleveland) and 3 (Arizona), and you know Andy Reid would love to be 3-0 heading into a Week 4 showdown vs. the Giants.

WEEK 3: PATRIOTS AT RAVENS

Billy Cundiff drinks alone. Kicker Billy Cundiff won't be able to redeem himself in this game after blowing that 32-yard field goal (he recently signed in Washington), but the AFC Championship Game rematch will still have plenty of drama. If the Patriots can get past Baltimore here, another 16-0 regular season could be a talking point on Monday, Sept. 24.

WEEK 4: GIANTS AT EAGLES

NFC B-east. This division should be the best in football, and the winner of this will give us an early idea of who will be in the driver's seat come late December. The Giants won in Philly at the same time of year last season, but the Eagles got revenge in the Meadowlands just prior to Thanksgiving.

WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE?

WEEK 5: BRONCOS AT PATRIOTS

Brady vs. Manning. The league's signature individual rivalry of the past decade returns. Brady and Patriots beat Manning and the Colts, 31-28, in Foxboro on Nov. 21, 2010, in the last meeting between the two future Hall of Famers. The Broncos will also be peeved because the Pats pounded them in the divisional round last January.

WEEK 6: PACKERS AT TEXANS

Super Bowl preview? Houston was a decent quarterback away from being the runaway favorite in the AFC playoffs last year. With Matt Schaub back, the Texans figure to be in the same class as the Packers as two of the best teams in the NFL.

WEEK 7: JETS AT PATRIOTS

Turning point for NYJ. Who knows where the Jets will be at this point? Tim Tebow could be starting at quarterback. Or Mark Sanchez could be thriving there. The NYJ could either be in first place in the AFC East or (gulp) be without a win. This will either be a classic Patriots-Jets war, or New England could put the final nail in the coffin of the Rex Ryan era. Regardless, we'll be watching.

WEEK 8: GIANTS AT COWBOYS

Halloween havoc. The Cowboys had little luck with the G-Men last season, going 0-2 against their division foes. This rematch of tonight's NFL season opener is one of the few marquee games on a relatively weak Week 8 slate.

▶ Peyton Manning

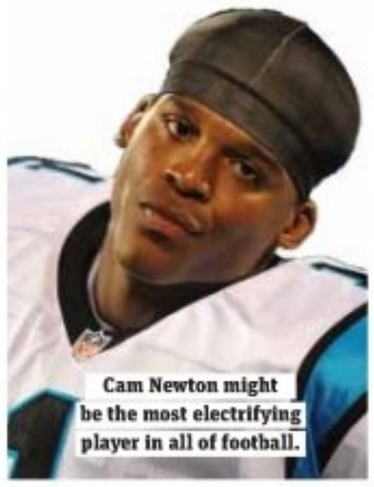
NOVEMBER PAIN

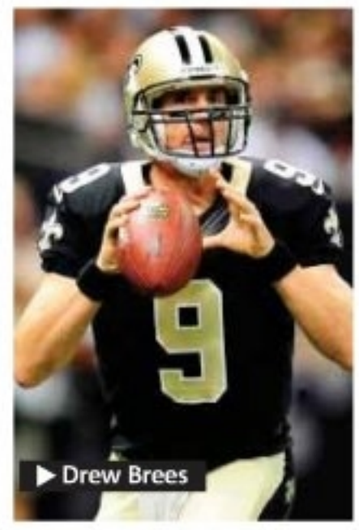
WEEK 9: EAGLES AT SAINTS

Bounty battle. The original bounty hunters vs. the new bounty hunters. Mike Vick vs. Drew Brees. Strap on your cleats and grab an Abita, because this might be the biggest track meet of the year, with two of the NFL's most dynamic offenses.

WEEK 10: BRONCOS AT PANTHERS

The past vs. the future. Peyton Manning looks to show he's not over the hill against the most electrifying player in the league, Cam Newton. Last year, defenses had no answers for Cam and his 35 total touchdowns.


Cam Newton might be the most electrifying player in all of football.


▶ Drew Brees

WEEK 11: PACKERS AT LIONS

Detroit Rock City. The Pack have had their way with the NFC North for the past couple of seasons, but the times may be a-changin'. If Matt Stafford and Megatron are clicking, Detroit could leave Week 11 in first place.

WEEK 12: 49ERS AT SAINTS

Oh, this should be fun. The last time we saw these two, Alex Smith had just thrown a 14-yard TD pass with nine seconds remaining as the 49ers punched their NFC Championship ticket. That didn't sit well down in the Big Easy, but it remains to be seen if New Orleans will be able to overcome all the offseason turmoil and still be in the mix come Thanksgiving.

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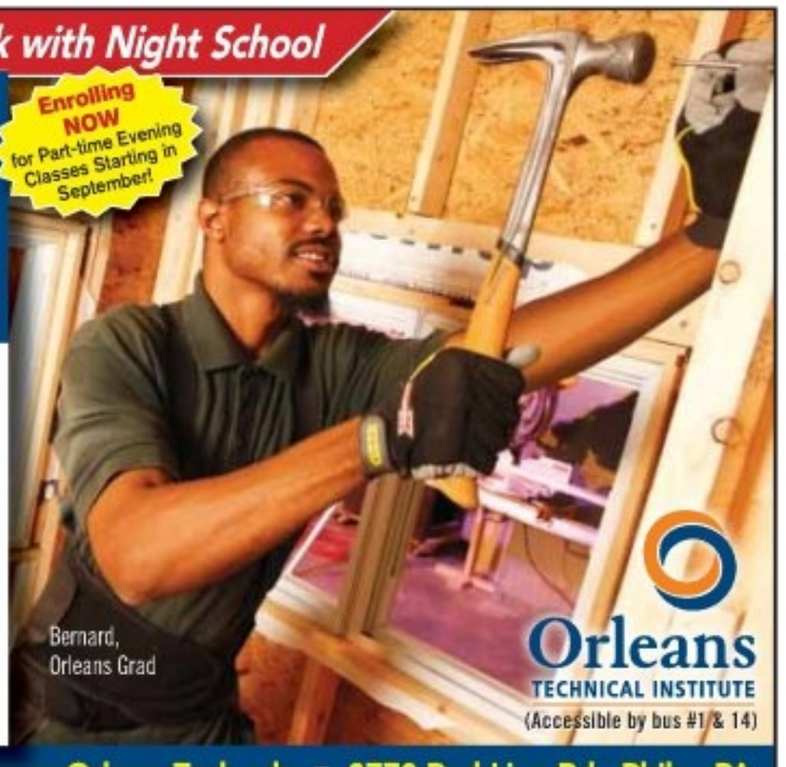
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Rollins collects No. 2,000

Before departing for the Phillies' recent roadtrip, Jimmy Rollins was asked to wax about his inevitable 2,000th career hit.

"Just hurry up and get here," Rollins said with a wide smile. "Hurry up and get here."

The milestone happened last night, during the fifth inning when Rollins stroked a double off Cincinnati Reds pitcher Mat Latos. Rollins bounced a ball over Reds first baseman Todd Frazier.

Rollins has become the fourth Phillie to amass 2,000 hits. Mike Schmidt, Richie Ashburn and Ed Delahanty are the others to reach such a distinctive mark. The common denominator for the lionized trio is that each is in the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Rollins doesn't want to look that far ahead.

"I'm only looking at this season," Rollins said. "Personal accomplishments are nice but this is a team game. I'm thinking primarily about us getting to the playoffs. That's what matters most. That's the most important thing. I want to get as many hits as possible. Hopefully, the hits will help us get us some wins as we attempt to get back to the playoffs. After all these years, the hits have started to add up — and that's a good thing."

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Rollins

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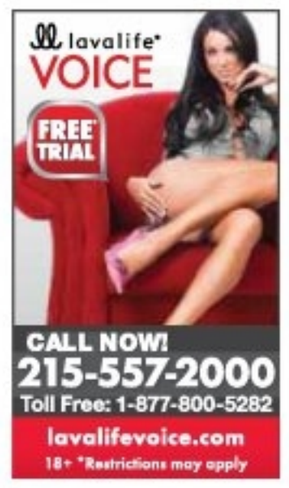

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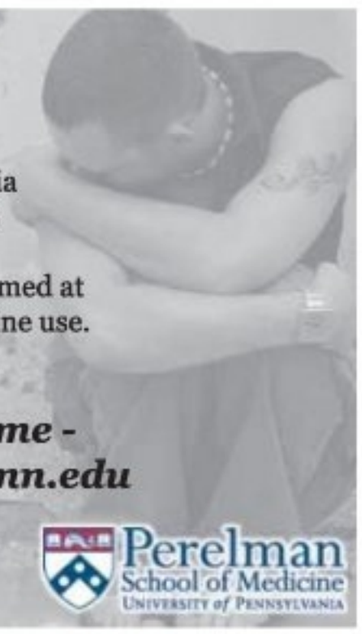

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at home with metro

3 Design trends

We scoured the New York International Gift Fair for the latest and greatest in home design ◗ The '70s are back, and sparkles never left ◗ Here's a tip: Don't toss out your mom's porcelain dishes just yet

▶ Metallic paints spruce up Ann Gish's humble linens.

Twice a year, Javits Center in New York City is packed with the latest and greatest in lamps, rugs, salad bowls and more as the New York International Gift Fair displays housewares to store buyers and media outlets. Here are three trends to note before you start redecorating your digs:

Linen with sparkle

Natural linen was everywhere: on furniture upholstery, pillows, bedding and tabletop goods. Threads of metallic, shiny trims and adornments helped to decorate this rather plain, humble fabric. One designer who stood out was Ann Gish (maker of high-end luxury bedding), who incorporated a hand-painted look of shimmer or sparkle into the fabric.

Ann Gish Gorgeous bedding, $400-$1,800, www.anngish.com

1970s Marrakech

The geometrics of the 1970s took a sophisticated turn this season by incorporating richer colors that resembled patterns often found in Moroccan textiles, rugs and ceramics. Zig-zag, fish scales and tilework were three hot looks, and famed designer Jonathan Adler nailed them all with his Carnaby collection of lamps, trays and mugs.

Feeling blue

One of the old-time design classics has been given resurgence in the contemporary world — many hip exhibitors were showing products that resembled blue-and-white porcelain. This classic color combination looks great with warm neutrals and can also hold its own against strong bursts of color.

Ink Dish's Irezumi four-piece dinner set, designed by famed Sunset Strip tattoo artist Paul Timman, features Japan-inspired imagery. $75, www.inkdish.com

Ink Dish offers a sleek update on the classic.

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Hot product

There's a reason those of us with multiple pets, multiple kids or some unholy combination of both happily lug around Dyson vacuum cleaners. Long the gold standard in industrial-strength sucking, they have an endless hunger for cat hair tumbleweeds and Cheerio dust. Dyson's latest model, however, is the best of both worlds: Weighing in at only five pounds, the cordless (yes, cordless) Dyson Digital Slim is a nimble little tool that packs 20 minutes of battery-powered, no-tangle suction. Go ahead — get inappropriately excited about a vacuum cleaner.

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at home with metro

Beyond the recliner

▶ If you must have a neon sign, at least let it lead to the drinks.

Despite being inducted into the Merriam-Webster dictionary this year, the term "man cave" is a divisive one. Critics imagine a smoky suburban basement, riddled with sports memorabilia and neon beer signs. Enthusiasts imagine pretty much the same scenario, plus a pinball machine. Joe Chiaccio saw only one thing when he set out to renovate his own basement: the potential to make quite a bit of money.

"A couple years ago, I inherited my great-grandfather's pool table, and I started to look around online for things that I'd use to decorate and finish my man cave," he remembers. "A lot of places left a lot to be desired. It almost seemed like people were treating it as a joke. But it's a really serious thing: Guys, if they have the means, will spend tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars on their man caves."

Chiaccio's Cherry Hill-based online store and design service, Man Cave Kingdom, does offer some of the kitsch we've come to expect. But along with the requisite "Live Nudes" sign, the site also offers designer furniture and custom-built kegerators that would look right at home in an upscale kitchen (and, with some going for more than $2,000, they should).

For the man with a cave but no design sense, Chiaccio and his team (which, yes, includes women) will custom-build a space, from a small shed to the 10,000-square-foot airplane hangar they converted just outside Boston.

No matter your restrictions, Chiaccio says that creating the perfect space is actually pretty simple. "There's kind of a holy trinity of the man cave: the bar, the TV setup and the kegerator. That's really all you need right there."

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